



The Interview

MYAT MOE KHAING

Baba has one of those loud, bellowing voices that can move an entire house. I'd sneak out in the afternoon when Baba was not around. Sometimes, I'd take the risk even when he took a nap right after the lunch. We lived on the first floor of our bamboo house. We had our hens and ducks beneath the platform of the house. Right before I climbed down the stairs, I had to make sure Luna didn't see me. So I'd tiptoe and leave our house by the back gate.

Luna was our dog, named after the moon. My favourite memory of her is tracking down the hills and chilling by the lake together on moonlit nights. I wanted to take her when I went to play with my friends. But every time she saw me, she'd bark and wag her tail excitedly. That would wake Baba up which meant no more playing at 2pm. What could I possibly tell my friends about not showing up?

But once Baba woke up, he'd start calling me. "Aidan! Come home right now!"

Initially, I'd still be fixated on my decision to keep crossing the paddy field. But Baba would shout "Don't make me start counting!"

Every time I heard that sentence I would immediately stop what I was doing and panic. Baba would scream "Three!" and pause. I'd tell myself 'Oh no, I've to hurry'. I'd run towards our home. By

the time he'd count to "Two," I was bolting up the stairs, two at a time. I always made it there on time, panting and out of breath.

Reaching home, my first job was to get to my table and start solving maths. It was my routine for the next 7 years until I started college.

I was never the brightest student of my class. But I was sincere and punctual. I woke up very early and walked miles. I even ran to class just to save money. Baba's counting and my running out of fear had eventually led to my ability of showing up at classes on time. Eventually I graduated and looked for a job.

For one interview, I woke up at 4 a.m. and left home. The closest bus station required two hours to reach to on foot. I reached the office at 9 a.m., an hour before the interview. I sat in the waiting room when someone came in and asked "Are you Hasan? Here for the 9 a.m. interview?"

"I am Aidan for the 10 a.m. interview," I replied.

He looked at me and then at the wall clock. He seemed to think something for a while.

"You're hired," he said.

I never learned what happened if Baba's counting got to one. But he seems happy with my job.

Myat Moe is an occasional philosopher whose favourite pastime is confusing people with her nationality. Reach her @145michelle@gmail.com

Melancholic Catastrophe

NASHEETAH HOSSAIN

Last night when I was dreaming of how
 it used to be
 There was a smile on my lips
 Prominent against my pale face.
 A skip in my heartbeat
 Sudden and exciting.
 Followed by a laugh
 Soft and real.
 A feeling of authenticity
 From the inner soul.
 But when I woke up this morning,
 And stood in front of the mirror
 I was shackled, and forced back into
 reality.
 I am nothing
 Without my feelings,
 Nothing without
 My tears and laughter.
 I am nothing
 But a whole lot of emptiness,
 I am,
 But a ghost of the girl I used to be.
*The writer is a grade 7 student of Sunbeams
 School.*

Her Legacy

SABRINA SAMREEN

The old widow left behind a myriad of legacy,
 Her red wedding *jamdaani*, *nakshi katha* bed sheet she had sewed,
 The minuscule *teep* that had adorned her forehead.
 Yellowed pages of diary entries she had written in blue,
 A witness to her trials hopes and dreams too.
 The balls of yarn, the sweater she had woven, mostly half done,
 The photo album, her prized Tagore collection,
 The bronze hair pin with an eagle head she wore on her bun,
 The silver trinkets, glass bangles, a peacock feather.
 The gold rimmed oversized glasses she had got last December.
 The purple comb, worn out from use.
 She had left behind the letters, slyly tucked away, out of sight,
 From the man who had wooed her.
 And the recipes were legacy,
 Jotted down on scraps and papers,
 Cherry pickle, pineapple *firni*, one Chinese delicacy.
 She had left behind her love, her prayers and her wishes,
 Her advice, her desires, her dreams were legacy.
 But who knew of them?
 Her legacy sat in a damp corner of the attic,
 Hoping to be found, and treasured,
 Her legacy cried in agony, worried and frantic,
 Her legacy,
 It ached mildly, and sobbed in secrecy,
 To hear the shouts and loud voices,
 It ached and bled profusely,
 While her sons and daughter in laws fought over the land she had left
 behind.
 Land wasn't legacy.

The writer is a student of North South University.

